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ABSTRACT

The achievement of development goals in education (as well as other fields) has not been particularly successful. Among the basic premises which implicitly define education and the association between education and development, the following three stand out as being particularly misguiding: (a) the view of education as a system, (b) the belief that the burgeoning demand for jobs and privileges for which education is prerequisite can be met only by offering more education, and (c) the belief that educational planning and administration can provide solutions to problems of educational inequity, inefficiency, and irrelevance. These premises have been promoted by the popularity of educational planning, which has not provided satisfactory solutions to the ever-widening development dilemma. Because of this, educators are turning to the study of educational innovation--to a functional rather than structural view of education. Some of the most expressive, yet least understood innovations are those occurring at the grass-roots level. These innovations usually promote goals outside the dominant system and seek a different form of education and society. The way in which development and education are viewed in grass-roots social change in Brazil is of particular interest. To the peasant or slum dweller, development is a concrete notion, not an abstract model. The term "education" in Brazil places the ultimate value upon human dignity, suggesting that development must be defined as an interaction between individuals and society. (PB)

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EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Avoiding the Pitfalls: Scene from the Bottom

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by

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In the broad sense, development problems are the paramount issue confronting social science today, but the conventional and dominant metaphors of social science have not proven adequate to permit man to deal effectively with these problems. I would like to start with this assumption, widening the context of development to encompass a broader process of social change, and accepting the now apparent proposition that our past conceptual approaches have not served us well.

Certainly when we speak of education, our experience with achieving development goals has been rather dismal. As we summarize the knowledge we have accumulated about education and development planning it becomes clear that we have learned more from error than from success. Education "scientists" have gone through the stages of first trying to employ the traditional system more efficiently, then of tinkering with the systems, and finally, coming to the point

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of searching for new approaches. That quest has led to a questioning of fundamental assumptions, and to reappraisal.

If we are going to better understand the nature of development and education, a number of basic premises widely taken for granted need to be placed aside. Three that have proven particularly misguiding, in my opinion, are as follows.

First is the view of education as a system; the "sectoral" notion that educational units--formal and non-formal--may be viewed as integrated parts of a production system, responsive to external inducements and strategies of change.

Second is the belief that the burgeoning demand for jobs and privileges for which education is prerequisite can be met only by offering more education.

Third is that education planning and administration can provide solutions to problems of educational inequity, inefficiency and irrelevance.

I mention these premises because they implicitly define education, and the association between education and development, in terms which cloud the real issues and interfere with our coming to an understanding of this process. System approaches lead to structural and institutional definitions of education derived from conceptual abstractions or from analyses of past history. Efforts to merely expand the educational system perpetuate the inadequacies of "traditional" education.

educational planning strategies derived from economic "growth" models are useful only for projecting the present system into the future. But the past does not provide a good model for the future.

The three premises I refer to have been promoted, in large part, by the popularity over the last two years of an of educational planning. But while this planning approach initially promised the solution of many social problems, it is now being held largely responsible for the consequences of the quantitative expansion of education systems ill-adapted both to the development requirements and the social aspirations in most countries.[1] It is only recently that some of the frustrating, paradoxical results of the planned education "system" have become visible; for example:

1. While millions of educated people are unemployed and under-utilized, millions of jobs are waiting because people with the right education cannot be found.

2. While schooling is viewed as the "route to economic and social recognition, non-school factors like parental influence, nutrition and peer group experience are proving more important in predicting school performance than are school related factors.

3. Notwithstanding the phenomenal increase in educational expenditures, the number of illiterate people has increased and educational opportunity and rewards continue to

be unequally distributed; new excluded from beneficiaries
areas more marginalized than before.

4. While educational systems are responsible to provide
a universal format for learning, it is becoming increasingly
apparent that formal education is not evenly or necessarily
beneficial to particular [illegible], to minorities groups, to
the poor, or to those who live in rural areas [illegible] or to
the majority of those employed in the development [illegible].

Moving to undemocratic education through a privatized
perspective has not provided satisfactory solutions to the
ever-widening development dilemma. Most data is failing, the
popularity of educational planning seems to remain shrouded in
relative origins, and education policies are [illegible] unable
apply to the study of educational innovation.

Innovation includes efforts to reform educational, to
administrate alternative models and means for change and improvement
of establishment, to "de-school." Innovation is not be
re-innovative or radical, but it is an approach to which requires
focus a new lens, taking a functional context that [illegible]
total view of education. Innovative approaches may help form
planned-based, time-based, outcome-based systems in an effective,
operating more of educational content and processes that of
systems and outputs. A popular expression of a form approach
equates education with inventing, and so many as [illegible] an
"innovative" approach would seem to offer [illegible]

[illegible]

America. (Debeauvais, "The Popularity of the Idea of Innovation," p. 495.)

9. Nonformal education has been popularized by large research financing from such organizations as US-AID, the World Bank and Unesco, demonstrating the influence of (quasi-)government interests and financing agencies in defining educational concepts and "guiding" research knowledge.

10. The problem with popular definitions is that they have been too strongly influenced by biased perspectives and vested interests, they have seldom evolved from a "pure," natural expression of reality (in the anthropological sense). Concerning these influences in education, see, for example, notes 7 and 9 above. For one comment on these influences in development see C. A. O. van Niewenhuijze (ed.), Development: The Western View, The Hague: Mouton, 1972.

11. This raises both ethical and practical questions. The intervention into the "science of education" has, in large part, been motivated by policy-makers' desire to overcome pressing social problems, i.e. relate training to "modern sector" job requirements, reduce educational expenditures, respond to the social demand for schooling. In this way "development" paradigms and their assumptions have had a strong influence in defining education. A. M. Huberman refers to these as "deficit motives." (Understanding Change in Education, IBE, Paris: Unesco, 1973.)

12. Within the context of change, innovation is by definition assumed to be desirable. On the other hand, the tendencies of institutions to resist change are well known. Because of this, the concept of innovation is frequently co-opted to the point where it becomes a "protean" of change rather than an autonomous activity acting upon change. It is a word subject to a great range of definitions and interpretations. One type of innovation which can transform the mode of behavior is innovation occuring as the result of self-initiative at the grass-roots. This form of innovation is relatively spontaneous, contrary to the "interventionist" model of planned change, yet is a "non-revolutionary" type of change.

13. While grass-roots initiatives can be found occuring "at the base" within institutions and even within governments, I refer here primarily to rural, non-directive, community development activities which promote human participation.

14. For a logical exposition of this definition of development see Edgar S. Dunn, Jr., Economic and Social Development: A Process of Social Learning, Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1971.

15. In Brazil the concept of "conscientization" was popularized by Paulo Freire (Educação como Pratica da Liberdade, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1967) and has since expanded throughout Latin America. For a reference to this literature see Stanley M. Grabowski (ed.), Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University, November 1972.

16. A deeper analysis of the meaning of "educação" in Brazil is needed. Historic class distinctions may place certain opposite connotations on the use of the word among many of the "uneducated" people.